116, 142, 201

"Several writers have given us anything but a flattering account of the looks of the Tasmanians. We are told their lineaments were gross, flat, and forbidding (Dixon, p. 22); their features were extremely disagreeable (Melville, p. 346): they had a most hideous expression of countenance (Prinsep, p. 79); their features were [13]flat and disagreeable (Breton, p. 349): features anything but pleasing (Widowson, p. 187). Lloyd speaks of the women as being repulsively ugly (p. 43), and West that the women had masculine features (II. p. 77). Péron's description runs thus:--'Amongst these savages the physiognomy is very expressive; the passions depict themselves with force, and succeed each other rapidly. As changeable as their affections, all the features alter and modify according to them. Their expression is fearful and wild when roused; restless and treacherous when in doubt; and when laughing, of a mad and almost convulsive gaiety. Amongst the aged the expression is sorrowful, hard, and gloomy; but in general, among all the individuals, and whenever one looks at them, their expression has something fierce and sinister about it, which does not escape the attentive observer, and corresponds only too completely with their character' (ch. xiii. p. 280). On another occasion Péron speaks of a native whose 'physiognomy had nothing harsh or wild about it; his eyes were lively and spirituel, and his air expressed at once good will and surprise' (ch. xii. p. 221). On the other hand, Calder reports more mildly of them (Journ. p. 20): 'The features of neither sex were prepossessing, especially after they passed middle age. . . .

In youth, some of the women were passably good looking, but not so the most of them;' and elsewhere he says (Wars): 'Our natives were not generally a good-looking race.... Some of the youths of both sexes were passable enough, and one woman whom I remember...was remarkably handsome. Some of the men, too, though very savage-looking fellows, were, in most respects, in no way the inferior of the European. A native of one of the West Coast tribes...possessed as fine and thoughtful features as any one would desire to look upon.' Lloyd speaks of the yet unmarried women as having something winning about them (p. 44). Cook (Voy. Bk. I. ch. vi.) says their features were far from disagreeable, and also that many of the children had fine features (ibid.); he is supported by Blackhouse (p. 174), who found 'many of their countenances fine and expressive.'"

116, 201

"Joy. -- Their joy was expressed by loud bursts of laughter; at the same time, they carried their hands to their heads, and made a quick tapping with their feet on the ground (La Billardière, II. p. 72), and Backhouse (p. 93) mentions that when 'Jumbo,' a native woman, was shown a musical box, 'listening with intensity, her ears moved like those of a dog or horse, to catch the sound.'"

"Bad Habits. -- Of one habit among one lot of men La Billardière (II. p. 72) says: 'We were much surprised to see most of them holding the extremity of the prepuce with the left hand, no doubt from a bad habit, for we did not observe anything of the kind among some others who soon afterwards joined them.' This habit [21] may have been common, as Péron gives an illustration of a group in which one man is drawn with the left hand in the position named.

We cannot perhaps close this chapter better than with Count Strzelecki's summary of their motions (p. 336): 'Compared with the negro, he is swifter in his movements, and in his gait more graceful. His agility, adroitness, and flexibility, when running, climbing, or stalking his prey, are more fully displayed; and when beheld in the posture of striking, or throwing his spear, his attitude leaves nothing to be desired in point of manly grace.'"

"They received with great joy the neck-cloths which we offered them: the young people approached nearer us; and one of them had the generosity to give me a few small shells of the whelk kind, pierced near the middle and strung like a necklace.... This ornament was the only one he possessed.... A handkerchief supplied the place of this present, gratifying the utmost wishes of my savage, who advanced towards me, that I might tie it round his head for him, and who expressed the greatest joy, as he lifted his hand up to feel it again and again.... The women were very desirous of coming nearer us; and though the men made signs to them, to keep at a distance, their curiosity was ready every moment to break through all other considerations. The gradual increase of confidence, however, that took place, obtained for them permission to approach.... A pole-axe which we used for cutting off some branches from the trees excited the admiration of these people. As they perceived us willing to give them anything in our possession, they did not scruple to beg it; and when we granted their request, they were overcome with joy. They were fully sensible also of the value of our knives, and received a few tin vessels with pleasure. When I showed them my watch, it attracted their desire, and one of them, in particular, expressed his wish to possess it: but he quickly desisted from his request, when he found I was not willing to part with it. The readiness with which we gave them our things led them, no doubt, to presume that they might take anything

belonging to us, without asking for it: this obliged us to set bounds to their desires; but we found that they returned to us, without the least resistance, such things as we could not dispense with for our own use.... I wished to get a kangaroo skin; among the savages about us there happened to be only a young girl who had one. When I proposed to her, to give [34] it me in exchange for a pair of pantaloons, she ran away to hide herself in the woods. The other natives appeared truly hurt at her refusal and called to her several times. At length she yielded to their entreaties, and came to bring me the skin.... She received a pair of pantaloons.... We showed her the manner of wearing them; notwithstanding, it was necessary for us to put them on for her ourselves. To this she yielded with the best grace in the world, resting both her hands on our shoulders, to support herself, while she lifted up first one leg, then the other, to put them into this new garment.... We invited them all to come and sit near our fire, and when they arrived there, one of the savages informed us by unequivocal signs, that he had come to reconnoitre us during the night. That we might understand he had seen us asleep, he inclined his head on one side, laying it on the palm of his right hand, and closing his eyes, and with the other, he pointed out the spot where we had passed the night. He then acquainted us, by signs equally expressive, that he was at the time on the other side of the brook, whence he observed us. ... We were desirous of showing these savages the effect of our fire-arms.... They appeared to be a little frightened at their report.'"

1: Roth--34-35 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 201, 609

"'I [KS: La Billardière] had not perceived the young girl for some time, but happening to look behind me, I saw, with surprise, seven [women] who had perched themselves on a stout limb of a tree, whence they attentively watched our slightest movements. As they all squatted on the bough they formed a pleasing group.' Some of the savages accompanied La Billardière to the coast, and he says: 'They no doubt conceived it to be our intention to return to Port D'Entrecasteaux, for we were twice mistaken in the road, and they both times pointed out to us that which led directly to it.... We hoped to be able to prevail on some of them to go on board with us; but they were already leaving us to rejoin their families. At our invitation, however, they deferred their departure. As soon as the boat came, we invited some of them to go on board. After taking a long while to resolve on it, three of them consented to get into the boat; but they got out again in great haste as we prepared to push off from the shore. We then saw them walk quietly along by the sea, looking towards us from time to time, and uttering cries of joy. The next day we returned in a large party. Some of the natives soon came to meet us, expressing by their cries the pleasure they felt at seeing us again. A lively joy was depicted on all their features when they saw us drawing near. The pains taken by one [35] of the mothers to quiet her infant, yet at the breast, who cried at sight of us, appeared to us very engaging. She could not pacify him till she covered his eyes with her hand, that he might not see us."

"The next day a great number of us landed near Port D'Entrecasteaux to endeavour to see the savages again. It was not long before some of them came to meet us, giving us tokens of the greatest confidence. They first examined, with great attention the insides of our boats, and then they took us by the arm, and invited us to follow them along the shore. We had scarcely gone a mile before we found ourselves in the midst of eight-and-forty of the natives. The little children were very desirous of everything shiny, and were not afraid to come up to us, to endeavour to pull off our buttons. Their mothers, less curious with respect to their own dress than that of their children, held them up to us, [36] that we might decorate them with the ornaments which we had intended for themselves. I ought not to omit a waggish trick which a young savage played one of our people. The sailor had laid down a bag of shell fish at the foot of a rock: the youth slily removed it to another place; and let him search a long while for it in vain; at length he replaced it where the sailor had placed it, and was highly diverted at the trick he had played him. This numerous party was transported with admiration, when they saw the effects of gunpowder thrown on the burning coals. They all entreated us to let them have the pleasure of seeing it several times. Not being able to persuade themselves that we had none but men among us, they long believed, notwithstanding all we could say, that the youngest of us were women. Their curiosity on this head carried them further than we shoud have

expected, for they were not to be convinced till they had assured themselves of the fact. When we re-embarked these good people followed us with their eyes for some time, before they left the shore, and then they disappeared in the wood. Their way brought them at times to the shore again, of which we were immediately informed by the cries of joy with which they made the air resound. These testimonies of pleasure did not cease till we lost sight of them."

"Péron's account [WEL: 1803] now follows. In looking in the direction from which cries had proceeded, 'we perceived two savages, who ran along the shore, both making great gestunes of surprise and admiration.... We answered by some cries, and tried to approach the bank; but instead of waiting for us, they dived into the forest and disappeared. In continuing our journey, we arrived at a small creek, at the end of which there was a pretty valley. We had hardly set foot ashore before two aborigines showed themselves at the top of a hillock. At the signs of friendship we made them, one of them threw himself, rather than descended from the rock. His physiognomy had nothing wild or harsh about it, his air expressed at once goodwill and surprise. That which seemed to strike him was the whiteness of our skin: wishing, no doubt, to assure himself that this colour was the same on the [39] whole of the body, he opened successively our waistcoats and shirts; and his astonishment manifested itself by great cries of surprise, and, above all, by extremely rapid stampings of the foot. Our long boat, however, appeared to occupy him even more than our persons; and after having examined us for some moments, he jumped into this vessel. There, without in the least troubling himself about the presence of the sailors, he appeared as if absorbed in his new examination; the thickness of the ribs and timbers, the solidity of its construction, its rudder, its oars, its masts, its sails; he observed everything with that silence and deep attention which are the least doubtful signs of interest and profound admiration. Just then, one of the oarsmen wishing, doubtless, to add to his surprise, gave him a glass bottle full of arrack, which

formed part of the rations of the crew. The lustre of the glass made the savage utter a cry of astonishment, he took the bottle and examined it for a few moments; but his curiosity was soon brought back to the boat, he threw the bottle into the sea, and then returned to his former examination. Neither the cries of the sailor for the loss of his bottle of arrack, nor the haste of one of his comrades to jump into the water to save it, appeared to affect him. He attempted several times to push out the long boat; but the cable which held it fast rendering his efforts useless, he was forced to abandon them, and to return to us, after having given us the most striking example we had ever seen of attention and reflection among savage peoples. Arrived at the top of the hillock, we found the second aborigine; he was an old man, about fifty years of age; his physiognomy, like that of the young man, was open and frank; and despite some undoubted signs of agitation and fear, one could easily distinguish candour and good nature. This old man, having examined us both with as much surprise and satisfaction as the first one, and having verified, as he did, the colour of our chests by opening our waistcoats and shirts, he made a sign to two women, who held off, to approach; they hesitated for a few moments, after which the elder one came to us, followed by the younger more timid and troubled one. The former appeared, like the old man, good and well disposed. The young woman had an interesting physiognomy. Her eyes had expression and something spirituel [in them] which surprised

us, and which we have never found since in any other woman of her nation; ... she appeared, moreover, to dearly love her child [a girl], [40] and her care for it had that affectionate and sweet character which is the particular attribute of maternal tenderness. At this juncture the young woman had a surprise. One of our sailors had a pair of fur gloves which he took off and put in his pocket on nearing the fire. On seeing this the young woman uttered so loud a cry that at first we were alarmed; but we were not slow to understand the cause of this species of fright, and by her expressions and gestures we could not doubt but that she had taken the gloves for real hands, or for a species of live skin, which could be taken off, put in one's pocket, and put on again as one pleased' (ch. xii. pp. 220-224)."

1: Roth--40
201

(No date) 1890

Tasmanians

"...the little children were imitating the grimaces and gestures of their parents, and nothing was more curious than to see these little negroes stamping their feet for joy at hearing our songs;..."

116, 562, 431, 609, 201

"Later on he [KS: Péron] says: 'On my return, I found that the little yawl of the "Géographe," having gone to fish on Bruny Island, the aborigines had appeared in large numbers, and that, loaded with [42] presents by our companions, they had passed the greater part of the day amongst them (ch. ii. p. 235). Early in the morning of the 31st of January, I landed on Bruny Island. I had already proceeded out of sight of the landing place, when, having rounded a big point, I perceived about twenty savages who were approaching me along the shore: I did not hesitate to retrace my steps, and in thus withdrawing met MM. Heirisson and Bellfin. They offered to return with me to the savages in order to open communications with them. We were already close to the troop, when, suddenly, it entered the forest and disappeared; without attempting to pursue the aborigines, which their agility would have rendered quite useless, we contented ourselves in calling them, showing them different objects, and, above all, in waving our handkerchiefs. At these signs of friendship the troop hesitated a moment, then stopped and decided to await us. We then discovered we had to do with women; there was not a single male amongst them. We were preparing to join them, when one of the oldest, separating herself from her companions, made a sign to us to stop and sit down by calling out loudly, médi-médi (sit down, sit down); she seemed also to beg us to lay aside our weapons, the sight of which frightened them. These preliminary conditions having been fulfilled, the women squatted on their heels, and from that moment appeared to abandon themselves without

reserve to the liveliness of their dispositions, all speaking at once, all questioning us at the same time, appearing often to criticize us and to be laughing at our expense; making, in a word, a thousand gestures and contortions as singular as they were varied. M. Bellefin began to sing, and accompanied himself with lively and animated gestures; the women were immediately silent, observing his gestures with as much attention as they seemed to give to his songs. As soon as a couplet was finished, some applauded by loud shouts, others laughed to splitting, while the younger, and no doubt more timid girls, remained silent, showing nevertheless, by their actions and the expression of their faces, their surprise and their satisfaction. Two or three young girls, of from 15 to 16 years of age, had in the expression of their countenances something most artless, affectionate, and sweet, as if the better qualities of the soul must exist, even in the midst of the savage tribe of the human race, as the especial appanage of youth. Amongst the elder women, some had a coarse and ignoble face; others, fewer in number, a wild and sullen look; but in all, one observed that air of uneasiness and dejection which misfortune and [43] servitude imprint on the forehead of every being who bears the yoke. One only had, among all her companions, preserved great confidence, with much cheerfulness and gaiety. After M. Bellefin had finished his song, she began to imitate his gestures and his tone of voice in a very original and funny way, which greatly amused her companions.

The deference we showed these women, and perhaps also the fresh charms which we owed to their cares, (1) seemed to increase their goodwill and their confidence in us; but nothing, however, could decide them to approach any nearer. At the least movement which we made, or seemed to make, to break the conditions imposed, they all jumped up in a hurry, and took to flight: in order, therefore, to enjoy their presence longer, we were obliged to conform entirely to their wishes. After having loaded them with presents and caresses [sic] we judged it time to return to the landing place; and our Van Diemen's Landers, appearing to be about to go in the same direction, the two troops started; but we were still obliged to give in to these inexorable women, and were condemned to walk along the flat shore, while they marched over the parallel sand-hills. Our route all the time was not less lively than our interview; and from the top of the sand-hills many pleasantries and enticements were sent to us, to which we endeavoured to respond as expressively as was possible. All at once, one of the women uttered a loud cry, which the others repeated with fright: they had discovered our small vessel and our companions. We tried to calm their fears; it was all useless, and the troop was already plunging into the forest

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"1. These women blackened the faces of their visitors."

when the woman, who almost alone had borne the responsibility of our interview, appeared to alter her mind. At her voice there was a movement of hesitation; she spoke for a moment or two to the others; but being, as it seemed to us, unable to persuade them to follow her, she descended alone from the sand-hills, and walking along the shore at some distance in front of us, with much assurance, and even with a kind of pride, she seemed to defy the timidity of her companions. The latter, in their turn, appeared ashamed of their weakness; little by little they became bolder, and decided at last to return to the shore. It was therefore with this numerous and singular escort that we arrived at our ships, near to which, by a chance difficult to foresee, all the husbands of these poor women had been assembled for some minutes. In spite of the most unequivocal proofs of the goodwill and generosity of our fellow-[44]countrymen, they still preserved a disturbed and sullen expression; their looks were wild and threatening; and in their whole attitude one distinguished an air of constraint, and malevolence, and treachery, which they in vain sought to hide; it seemed as though they were mortified at the failure of their various attacks, (1) while at the same time they dreaded our vengeance. A few days later

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"1. The savages had on several occasions thrown spears at Péron's party, they themselves being hidden in the forest."

116, 562, 431, 609, 201

I had the pleasure of meeting the same woman who has so often been mentioned. I then learnt that her name was Arrà-Màĭdà. M. Petit drew her portrait; therein will be noted will be noted that character of assurance and dignity which so eminently distinguished this woman among all her companions' (ch. ii. pp. 250-256)."

1: Roth--45 [2] (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 201, 609

"Generally, they appeared to me to have much intelligence; they grasped my gestures with ease; from the very first instant they seemed to perfectly understand their object; they willingly repeated words which I had not been able to seize at first, and often laughed to splitting, when, whishing to repeat them, I made mistakes, or pronounced them badly."

1: Roth--47-48 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 201, 609, 721

"Backhouse mentions that under circumstances of rage among this people it is common for them to seize a stick and brandish it about (p. 103). During the war they naturally became vindictive. Desperate characters, who have absconded into the woods, have no doubt committed the greatest outrages upon the Natives, and these ignorant beings, incapable of discrimination, are now filled with enmity and revenge against the whole body of white inhabitants' (Colonel Arthur, Colonies and Slaves, Van Diemen's Land, p. 5). A Government Order says: 'It is evident, from the [48] hostile spirit of the natives, and from the cunning which seems common to all savages, that they are not to be approached without some personal danger (ibid. p. 34), and for such behaviour as this no one can reasonably blame them.'"

1: Roth--53 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 201, 431, 609

"... Captain Bligh has the following account of their strange behaviour when he offered them articles which must have been unknown to them before: -- 'The natives not coming near us, I determined to go after them, and we set out, in a boat, towards Cape Frederick Henry.... I found landing impracticable, and therefore came to a grapnel, in hopes of their coming to us.... Soon after we heard their voices like the cackling of geese, and twenty persons came out of the wood, twelve of whom went round to some rocks when the boat could get nearer to the shore than we were. Those who remained behind were women. We approached within twenty yards of them, but there was no possibility of landing, and I could only throw to the shore, tied up in paper, the presents which I intended for them. I showed the different articles as I tied them up, but they would not untie the paper till I made an appearance of leaving them. Then they opened the parcels, and, as they took the articles out, placed them on their heads. On seeing this, I returned towards them, when they instantly put everything out of their hands, and would not appear to take notice of anything that we had given them. After throwing a few more beads and nails on shore, I made signs for them to go to the ship, and they, likewise, made signs for me to land, but as this could not be effected, I left them.... When they first came in sight, they made a prodigious chattering in their speech.... They spoke so quick, that I could not catch one single word they uttered' (pp. 50-51)."

1: Roth--53-54 (No date) 1890 Tasmanians
116, 201, 609, 183

"When Bunce first met them, they scarcely deigned to look at his party (p. 55). Backhouse's later experience at their settlement on Flinders Island throws a little light on their apparent apathy. He relates (p. 81): 'A considerable number of the aborigines were upon the beach when we landed, . . . but they took no notice of us until requested to do so by W. J. Darling; they then shook hands with us very affably. It does not accord with their ideas of proper manners to appear to notice strangers, or to be surprised at any novelty. On learning that plenty of [54] provisions had arrived by the cutter, they shouted for joy. After sunset they had a corrobery or dance round a fire, which they kept up till after midnight, in testimony of their pleasure.' 'When Jumbo [a native woman] first came on board, she was shown a musical box, constructed like a musical snuff box. Having been brought up among Europeans, she did not feign inattention to novelties, as is common with her country people, but showed pleasure and astonishment in a remarkable degree' (ibid. p. 93)."

"Mr. Leigh says, the aborigines 'are peaceable towards those who use them well, but revengeful of injuries' (III. p. 242), and West (II. p. 89): 'They were cruel in their resentment, but not prone to violence; ... they were not ungrateful, especially for medical relief. ... The English were seen by some friendly natives to draught the toad fish, which is poison, and by which several have perished; the natives, perceiving its preparation for food, endeavoured to show, by gestures, that it was not to be eaten, and exhibited its effects by the semblance of death.' La Billardière mentions the case of a native who expressed his gratitude for a cock given him by pointing to the bird on his shoulder (II. ch. x. p. 66)."

116, 576, 201, 832

"No very striking or remarkable customs appear to have prevailed among the Tasmanians. We are told by Péron (p. 221), that kissing and embracing were seemingly unknown to them as salutations, for having thus saluted one of the natives, Péron adds: 'From the air of indifference with which he received this proof of our interest, it was easy to judge it had no meaning for him;' while in another place (p. 282) he says: 'I must not omit to mention an interesting discovery I then made [in an interview with fourteen aborigines]; it was, that they had no idea of the action of embracing.' He then proceeds to describe how he endeavoured to make them understand by practical demonstrations, but that their only response was Nidego (I do not know), leading him to believe that the custom of embracing was unknown to these people. He adds: 'I must, however, guard myself from stating this to be a positive fact, only adding here that I have never seen a savage, either in Van Diemen's Land or New Holland, embrace one of their own, or one of the opposite sex.' According to La Billardière (II. p. 33), the action of hand-shaking was not unfamiliar to them, judging from the following incident which he has recorded. A party of natives having been met with, 'I hesitated not,' he says, 'to go up to the oldest, who accepted... a piece of biscuit.... I then held out my hand to him as a sign [73] of friendship, and had the pleasure to perceive, that he comprehended my meaning very well: he gave me his, inclining himself a little, and raising at the same time his left foot, which he carried backward in proportion as he bent his body forward.' The

indifference, and possibly dislike, of the Tasmanians, to kissing, is amusingly illustrated in the following anecdote narrated by West (p. 89): 'A little boy, captured by a surveyor in 1828, ... on entering a room where a young lady was seated, was told to kiss her; after long hesitation, he went up to her, laid his fingers gently on her cheek, then kissed them, and ran out!' While they appear to have been demonstrative in their reception of friends, strangers were treated with indifference."